



Submission

Wellington City Council

Wellington Waterfront Ltd

Wellington Employers' Chamber of Commerce

November 2012

The Wellington Employers' Chamber of Commerce advocates policies that reflect the interests of Wellington's business community and the development of the regional economy as a whole. It works closely with other chambers in the region.

The Wellington Employers' Chamber of Commerce is very supportive of the general direction of the Wellington waterfront development. It has helped make Wellington an attractive place to work, live and visit and so has enhanced both the local economy and the business environment. We fully support the emphasis on public spaces surrounded by low-rise, mixed-use buildings incorporating residential, commercial, retail and hospitality activities.

We would like to comment on the future of Wellington Waterfront Ltd and also the North Kumutoto site which the council is currently consulting on.

Wellington Waterfront Ltd

We support retaining Wellington Waterfront Ltd until June 2015 to oversee the completion of the waterfront development.

Our main concern is that the development of the waterfront continues, and that the project is not stalled and is completed in a timely fashion.

We recognise that the economic climate has played a role in slowing the development but there is a strong case for moving on with the project so as not to lose momentum or institutional knowledge.

As long as the commercial development of the waterfront continues we think it is important that the Wellington Waterfront company is retained and the development oversight carried out within it.

The waterfront development is a commercial operation and so using a separate company as a vehicle (as opposed to it being done within the City Council) has always made sense. The Council simply does not have the necessary development expertise to do this work and nor should it.

Having said that, we do not want the waterfront company to have a life of its own. The arguments for retaining it exist as long as the development is carrying on but at the point that the waterfront is fully developed, we think it makes sense to fold the operations into the council.

There may be a case for certain operational functions to go back to council but the development function needs to remain at arms length from the council.

We understand and are pleased that the development is expected to be completed by June 2015, and as stated, we support the winding up the company's operations by this date.

It is also important to signal this endpoint in advance so that the life of the company is not extended longer than it needs to exist.

North Kumutoto

Finally we would like to take this opportunity to comment on the design brief for the North Kumutoto site which WCC has recently consulted on. We have made a separate submission on this issue.

Given the need for a five star hotel in Wellington and the prime waterfront location offered by Kumutoto, we think this would be an excellent use of the site.

For this reason we recommend the design brief should accommodate this possibility and that it be actively pursued as a commercial development. It is essential that a possible hotel on the site is not ruled out at this stage of the process.